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ABSTRACT

The purpose of a study was to identify factors impacting on supportive behavior exhibited by pre-service home economics education teachers that relate to student-teacher interaction. Four types of positive affective actions were examined: verbal, physical contact, facial, and physical proximity. A pretest/posttest design used videotaped micro-teaching sessions as the tests. The control and two treatment groups were comprised of 123 female students enrolled in four sections of a home economics education orientation class at Brigham Young University. All groups received written and oral feedback on lesson outlines and micro-teaching sessions and three mini lessons between the two sessions. The control group received feedback and mini lessons on instructional behaviors. The first treatment group received feedback on instructional and supportive behaviors; mini lessons were concerned only with instructional behaviors. The second treatment group received feedback and mini lessons on supportive behaviors. Findings were that physical proximity was the most frequently used supportive behavior, use of all supportive behavior increased, there was no significant difference in use of supportive behavior among the three groups, use of facial supportive behavior showed least gain, and there was a positive correlation between a subject's total self-concept score and use of verbal supportive behavior. A significant conclusion was that receiving mini lessons on use of physical contact and proximity had a positive effect on their use. (Five tables are appended.) (YLB)

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Use of Supportive Behaviors By Home Economics Education Students In a Pre-Service Course

Introduction

Three principle domains of learning: the cognitive, the affective, and the psychomotor were recognized with the evolvement of the taxonomy of educational objectives. Bloom's (1956) work on the cognitive domain, deals with educational objectives concerning knowledge, intellectual skills, and abilities. Krathwohl, Bloom, and Masia's (1964) work established the affective domain of educational objectives which deals with interest, attitudes, and values. The psychomotor domain, as investigated by Simpson, (1967) deals with manipulative skills and abilities. Each of these domains involves distinct types of behavior; yet when a person acts, all of the levels may impact on the same action.

Educators, as with many approaches in education, tend to overemphasize one area, later realizing they may have been too narrow in their considerations (ASCD Yearbook 1977). Rogers (1969) indicated that educational objectives utilizing the affective domain should be included in educational course work if cognitive behavioral changes are to occur that prepare people in competencies required for life. This relationship between cognitive and affective learning was substantiated by Stanford and Roark's (1974) work in human interaction.

Recently a great deal of emphasis has been placed on the importance of the cognitive development of children. In fact so much stress has been applied that this emphasis tends to exclude other teaching and learning principles in the education of children. Educators are becoming increasingly aware that a total environment for learning must include work in all the domains--the affective, the psychomotor, and the cognitive--in order for children to progress in the educational milieu, but more importantly to help them develop into mature, contributing members of society.

A classroom atmosphere conducive to the development of the total person is paramount to the success of an educational approach. As research provides more information concerning the importance of the affective domain, it is imperative that teacher educators scrutinize their curricula to determine when and where affective precepts can be taught to pre-service and in-service teachers and then see that these are included in programs to enhance teachers.

Problem

Minimal emphasis on and implementation of affective and supportive behaviors in the learning environment is evident in many classrooms as well as in teacher education programs. Thus, there is a need to assist teachers in understanding the importance of using supportive behavior in the learning environment and the acquisition of the skills necessary to implement these behaviors.

Purpose

The purpose of this study was to identify factors which impact on supportive behavior exhibited by pre-service Home Economics Education teachers that relate to student-teacher interaction. Four types of supportive behavior previously used by Larson (1972) in the study of the effects training of teachers in using supportive behaviors has upon young children in learning a cognitive concept and a motor

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skill provided the basis for this study. This study examined the positive affective actions exhibited by pre-service teachers in a microteaching situation. The supportive behaviors examined were: (1) verbal (any statement of praise, affection, encouragement, acceptance and approval); (2) physical contact (touching the other person, squeezing an arm or a hand, and/or sitting or standing shoulder to shoulder); (3) facial (any facial expression with a positive connotation such as a smile, nod, wink, grin, laugh, and/or chuckle); (4) physical proximity (any positive body language such as moving toward a person, standing close, lending a helping hand, and eye-to-eye contact as students work or as the teacher works in front of the class).

The relationship between the use of these supportive behaviors and the pre-service teacher's self-concept was also examined.

Sample

The sample consisted of 123 female students enrolled in four sections of a Home Economics Education orientation class at Brigham Young University. All sections were taught by the same instructor. Students met requirements for inclusion in the study if they (1) submitted an outline before each microteaching experience, (2) attended three mini lessons, and (3) presented two microteaching demonstrations. Subjects in each section were assigned to a control or treatment group according to a table of randomization.

Procedures

The study was a pretest/posttest design which used videotaped micro-teaching sessions as the tests. The treatment groups received different stimuli between the pretest and the posttest. There were three groups in the study, a control and two treatment groups. All three groups received written and oral feedback on the second lesson outline, written and oral feedback on the two videotaped sessions, and three mini lessons between the first and second videotaped microteaching sessions. The types of feedback and lessons varied with each group. The control group received feedback concerning instructional behaviors for the lessons and videotapes, and received mini-lessons on instructional behaviors. The first treatment group received feedback on instructional and supportive behaviors but the mini-lessons were concerned only with instructional behaviors. The second treatment group received feedback concerning supportive behaviors only plus having mini lessons on supportive behaviors. (Table 1).

Analysis of Data

The basic data collected in the study consisted of a pre-treatment and post-treatment observed count of the supportive behavior exhibited by the subjects. A mean gain frequency was ascertained by subtracting the pre-treatment frequencies from the post-treatment frequencies. The rate was determined by dividing the frequency of the behavior exhibited by the number of minutes of the microteaching experience. Therefore, the mean gain rate is the frequency of the behavior exhibited per minute.

An analysis of variance was performed to determine if a significant difference existed among the mean gain rates of the control group and the treatment groups and between the two treatment groups.

The Pearson r Product Moment Coefficient of Correlation was used to determine whether or not a significant relationship existed between a subject's composite

self-concept score and the pre-treatment observed count of the composite supportive behavior exhibited in a microteaching experience. The acceptable level of significance for all statistics was established at .05.

Findings

The findings based upon results of the statistical treatment of the data collected for this study are:

1. Physical proximity was the supportive behavior used most frequently (Table 2).
2. There was an increase in the use of all four categories of supportive behavior between the first microteaching experience and the second microteaching experience except for a decrease in physical contact by the treatment one group (Table 3).
3. There was no significant difference between the control group and the combined treatment one and treatment two groups in the use of the four categories of supportive behaviors.
4. The use of facial supportive behavior resulted in the lowest mean gain F score of all the categories of supportive behaviors on all the statistical tests executed.
5. When the control group was compared with the treatment one group and the treatment two group, it was found that no significance existed. However, it is interesting to note that a trend was indicated in the use of supportive behavior, physical proximity in treatment one group and physical contact in treatment two group.
6. There was no significant difference between the treatment one group and the treatment two group in the use of the supportive behaviors verbal and facial. However, a significant difference existed between treatment one and treatment two in the use of physical contact, physical proximity, and the total use of the four categories of supportive behaviors (Table 4).
7. There was no significant correlation between the use of the supportive behaviors physical contact, facial, and physical proximity and the compostie self-concept score. However, the findings did indicate that there was a significant correlation between a subject's composite self-concept score and the use of verbal supportive behavior (Table 5).

Conclusions

Four conclusions appeared to be justified on the basis of an interpretation of the research findings:

1. Physical proximity was the supportive behavior used most frequently by the subjects. Several factors may have influenced the use of this behavior. First, the particular conglomeration of behaviors included in this category and identified as physical proximity in earlier studies and then used in this study may have resulted in a skewed frequency in the use of physical proximity. In retrospect and after observation of the presentations, there is question about the relationship between eye-to-eye contact and physical proximity. It appears that eye-to-eye contact was the easiest supportive behavior to use by the subjects. Perhaps this use of eye-to-eye contact is related to the cultural norm of looking people in the eye and may not have been of a "quality" which reflected supportiveness. The subjects selected their

own students and was apparent to the microteaching observers that a majority of the subjects selected people they were acquainted with and felt comfortable being around. This supports Johnson's (1972) thesis that people use more eye-to-eye contact when they "like each other." Another factor raised as the researcher observed was that even though coders were trained to recognize eye-to-eye contact and a high validity was established among the coders, there might have been a tendency for them to assume that a glance toward the people being taught was an eye-to-eye contact.

The use of physical contact with less frequence than any other supportive behavior might have resulted from recognized cultural patterns and norms such as protection of personal space. Because of this pattern, people tend to be hesitant about reaching out and touching another, unless a close personal relationship exists. This is supported by Hall (1968) in his work on the concept of territoriality.

The topics chosen for the demonstration by the student teacher could have had an influence on the amount of physical contact used. If the topic was one that was conducive to helping students, being close to them, and/or touching hands while showing a skill, then more physical contact occurred. If the topic did not lend itself to helping students being taught, it required much more effort on the part of the demonstrator to come in physical contact with the students. It also appeared that if a demonstrator were skilled and at ease with the topic being demonstrated, there was a greater tendency to touch the student during the microteaching experience.

Of particular interest is that an increase occurred in the use of the four supportive behaviors tested between the pre test and the post test in the control group, treatment one group, and treatment two group for all behaviors except physical contact in treatment one. In this treatment the pre test had a larger mean rate per minute (.094) than the post test (.092). This perhaps resulted because of the effect of the subjects in this treatment group receiving three mini lessons and oral and written feedback with emphasis on the use of instructional behaviors. The mini lessons might have increased students' concentration and efforts on the use of instructional behaviors to the extent that their normal supportive behaviors were curtailed. The increase in the remaining supportive behavior categories and the different treatment groupings might have resulted because students were having a first experience of being videotaped in a laboratory situation. Thus, they might have been more reserved in their initial presentation. After the first videotaping experience, students could have relaxed more and felt freer to use supportive behaviors that would normally occur in daily communications with others. However, as indicated in Table 3 the treatment two group which received the mini lessons on the use of supportive behaviors had the greatest mean rate per minute increase in the use of supportive behaviors. This would indicate that exposure to principles related to support behavior emphasized in three mini lessons had some effect on subjects' use.

2. The facial supportive behavior was the supportive behavior with the lowest F score on each of the hypotheses tested. Perhaps the use of facial expressions in a laboratory situation conformed to the social norm of what is expected of individuals in a teaching position. Hence, this social expectation might have held this behavior at a consistently low F score. This assumption is supported by Knapp (1978) in his work on nonverbal communication. He stated that individuals have display rules which tend to be followed. The display rules are learned, they are not at a conscious level, they are culturally prescribed, and they are related to status and role positions.

Therefore, no treatment had a significant effect on the use of facial supportive behavior.

3. Receiving mini lessons on the use of physical contact, physical proximity, and the total use of the four supportive behaviors (including facial and verbal behaviors which were nonsignificant when tested individually) had a positive effect on the use of these supportive behaviors by Home Economics Education students. Lessons emphasizing the fact that it is "all right" and acceptable to touch a person being taught and to use positive nonverbal movements (stepping and leaning toward, standing close) toward people did make a difference in the amount these supportive behaviors were used.

Nonverbal communication is as important as verbal communication and congruency between these messages is an important factor in developing a teaching-learning relationship free of fear. This fear-free, teaching-learning situation influences the teacher-student communication process, hence increasing the potential for optimal learning. The findings tended to substantiate the observations made by researchers who have found that there is a greater propensity for learning if the atmosphere for learning is free of fear-inducing elements. The use of supportive behaviors may help produce this atmosphere.

4. There was a positive correlation between an individual's total self-concept score and the use of verbal supportive behavior, thus providing evidence that the use of verbal supportive behavior may be an indication of an individual's self-concept.

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TABLE 1

Treatment Received by Control Treatment One and Treatment Two

Treatment	Control	Treatment One	Treatment Two
Feedback on lesson outline	I*	I and S+	S
Feedback on two videotapes	I	I and S	S
Mini lessons	I	I	s

*I = Instructional Behavior

+S = Supportive Behavior

Table 2

Mean Rate per Minute for Supportive Behaviors Most Frequently and Least Frequently Used

Behavior	Pre Test			Post Test		
	Control	Treatment One	Treatment Two	Control	Treatment One	Treatment Two
Physical proximity	3.195	3.346	2.963	3.685	3.434	3.663
Facial	1.843	1.912	1.721	2.124	2.109	2.120
Verbal	.496	.489	.532	.826	.868	.974
Physical contact	.049	.094	.030	.088	.092	.197

Table 3

Difference in Mean Gains in the Use of Supportive Behaviors Between the Pre Test and the Post Test

Behavior	Control			Treatment One			Treatment Two		
	Pre test	Post test	Diff.	Pre test	Post test	Diff.	Pre test	Post test	Diff.
Physical proximity	3.195	3.685	.490	3.346	3.434	.088	2.963	3.663	.700
Facial	1.843	2.124	.281	1.912	2.109	.197	1.721	2.120	.399
Verbal	.496	.826	.330	.489	.868	.379	.532	.974	.442
Physical contact	.049	.088	.039	.094	.092	-.002	.030	.197	.167

Table 4

Mean Gains per Minute in the Use of Supportive Behaviors Between Treatment One Group and Treatment Two Group

Supportive Behavior	DF	MS	SD	F	p*
Verbal	1	.0580	.6711	.1237	NS
Physical contact	1	.5840	.3191	6.0186	.05
Facial	1	1.3394	1.2568	.0332	NS
Physical proximity	1	7.1302	1.0573	7.4920	.01
Total	1	23.7925	2.3659	4.8684	.05

*$p < .05$. $p < .01$.
$F = 3.92$. $F = 6.85$.

Table 5

Correlation Between Use of Supportive Behaviors and Self Concept in a Microteaching Experience

Supportive Behavior	Pearson r Correlation Coefficient TSCS	F	p*
Verbal	.19364	4.714	.05
Physical contact	.15606	3.025	NS
Facial	.02175	.057	NS
Physical proximity	.02366	.068	NS
Total	.07395	.665	NS

*$p < .05$.
$F = 3.92$.